

- 9 -

Claims

1. A top closure panel for closing the top of an open-topped container, the panel having a plurality of apertures, each to receive a portion of an article held within the container, at least one of the apertures including a tear feature for enlarging the size of the one aperture, the tear feature comprising at least one discrete group of slits, the slits of the or each group radiating from the aperture, each slit of the or each group is disposed transversely of a notional radial line such that removal of an article through the one aperture causes a tear to propagate divergently from the notional radial line thereby causing the size of the aperture to be progressively increased.
2. A top closure panel according to claim 1 wherein the or each discrete group of slits comprises at least two slits wherein the slit furthest from the one aperture is longer than the slit closest to the one aperture.
3. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the or each discrete group of slits comprises at least three slits arranged such that one of the at least three slits is located closest to the one aperture and that other two slits further distant from the one aperture are located at substantially the same distance from the one aperture, and wherein the one and other two slits are arranged in a staggered fashionslit.
4. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein a termination of one of the slits of the or each group is spaced 1 to 5 mm from a termination of an adjacent slit of the or each group.
5. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the top closure panel is prevented from being completely released from the open top container by a retaining means provided by the open top container.
6. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the one aperture comprises an initiating cut disposed substantially on the notional radial line.

- 10 -

7. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the slits of the or each group are of substantially equal length.
- 5 8. A top closure panel according to any one of the preceding claims wherein each of the slits of the or each group is arcuate segment and the slit of the or each group are arranged concentrically with respect to the center of the one aperture.
- 10 9. A blank for forming a top closure panel for closing the top of an open-topped container, the panel having a plurality of apertures, each to receive a portion of an article held within the container when in use, at least one of the apertures including a tear feature for enlarging the size of the one aperture, the tear feature comprising at least one discrete group of slits, the slits of the or each group radiating from the one aperture, each slit of the or each group is disposed transversely of a notional radial line such that removal of an article through the one aperture causes a tear to propagate
15 divergently from the notional radial line thereby causing the size of the one aperture to be progressively increased.
- 20 10. A blank for forming a top closure panel according to claim 9 wherein the or each discrete group of slits comprises at least two slits wherein the slit furthest from the one aperture is longer than the slit closest to the one aperture.
- 25 11. A blank according to claim 9 or 10 wherein the tear feature further comprises an initiating means which extends generally normally from an edge of the one aperture and towards the or each group of slits.
12. A blank for forming a top closure panel according to any one of claims 1 to 8.